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## **Testimony – Neither For Nor Against**

### **LD 544, An Act to Eliminate Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges**

**Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director of SAM-ILA**

**March 15, 2021**

The honorable Senator Dill, Representative Landry, members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, my name is David Trahan, I am the Executive Director of the SAM Institute for Legislative Action and I am testifying neither for nor against LD 544, An Act to Eliminate Moose Permits for Hunting Lodges.

Just a few short years ago, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine partnered with the Maine State Museum on a project to capture the history of hunting camps in Maine. The reason we participated in this important project was to ensure this important historical community was not lost. Traditional hunting camps are fast becoming an endangered species, commercial hunting camps included.

When this new opportunity to allot 25 permits for hunting lodges became law, it was hoped that the new revenue stream would aid camps reeling from the loss of a healthy White tailed deer population in most of northern, eastern and western Maine. Nothing has changed since that time to warrant repeal of this new program, but like some that will testify, we have heard concerns about the program.

Like all programs of state government, this policy should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it meets legislative intent and whether it is fulfilling its intended purpose. We hope the committee will take a close look at this law and if needed make any changes necessary to ensure it is helping as many lodges as possible.

We are a year into the Pandemic and the economic fallout is at its worst. Pulling the plug on this program could severely harm lodges that are struggling to survive. We hope the committee can offer improvements if they are warranted and more importantly, not lose sight of the fact that the Moose is a precious natural resource under the protection and management of all the people of this state.

Whatever we do when managing a natural resource it should reflect the values of Maine people. Simply put, we should be proud to defend all wildlife management programs of this department and if we can't, change may be necessary.